

the weather. Invalidated showman's vans, smacking of "Dr. Marigold's Prescriptions," have been bought for an old song on the downs, and quickly converted to their new vocation. No longer the dulcet tones of an itinerent vendor of unpatented medicines, but the cackling of many chickens is heard within them. Each of the coops accommodates some 300 of the chickens and they are locked in for the night. Recently Mr. Wells had about seventy poultry slain by the foxes, so that it is expedient to lock them in; and as he is all fox-hunter, he cannot think of taking his revenge out of the foxes, save in the way of a "brush" honorably won in the chase. The chickens know their respective coops, so that there is no confusion even among so many. The coops are frequently lime-washed inside to sweeten them, and the manure is collected daily, mixed with road dust, ashes, soot and the like, and stored up for use on the farm. In like manner the offal of the dressed fowls is taken care of, and a valuable compost is formed. The manure, indeed, as the fowls are liberally fed on the best of food, should be of superior quality, and as there is a considerable quantity of it, there is a profit here which is not to be despised. It seems a bit odd at first to see these twenty chicken houses on wheels, studded here and there about the farm, but one soon grows accustomed to it, particularly when he reflects that space is essential to the health and well-being of the poultry. One man at a guinea a week, with a lad occasionally helping him, is found sufficient to take charge of the six thousand.

During the autumn and winter, Mr. Wells raises his own chickens, from eggs laid by his own hens, by incubators and artificial mothers. He prefers a cross between Hamburgs and Dorkings, because the fowls are vigorous and plump. But in spring and summer he finds it cheaper to buy young chickens, at 8d. to 10d. apiece, from the farmers and cottagers of the district. In the period when everybody is raising chickens there is nothing gained in raising his own, he thinks. Farmers and cottagers, he says, never have any fowls ready when they are dear, and this is why he raises his own in winter. His aim is to raise a constant supply for the London market. He has three carts going around collecting chickens at the present time, and the dealers bring them to him as well. In this way he manages to send off twelve to fifteen dozen to the London salesman, and on special occasions, like that of the Derby Day, he quadruples the number for an odd day. He has an advantage over the higglers in being able to hold back his supply when the market is overdone. Most of the bought chickens run out on the fields for a month or two, until they are ready for stall feeding so to speak. Every morning a number of them are se-

lected from the coops and taken to the shed where the stall feeding goes on. Others are ready for the stalls when they are bought, and go directly to them. In this way the daily supply is regulated.

In the feeding shed there are tiers of small cages neatly arranged, each cage holding ten or a dozen fowls. The finishing touch is put on the chickens by the aid of milk and meal of one sort or another, and in this sedentary confinement they will fall quickly into habits of thought and ease, which are conducive to obesity. Well fed on the pastures, they fatten out in a few days in the stalls. Each day the fattest are selected for dressing, and their places filled up by others. Nine pence a dozen is paid for dressing, and the freight to London costs an equivalent sum. Two lbs. of feathers per dozen is the average yield, and they sell for threepence a pound. A man does the dressing by piece work, and does it well; he provides his own assistants, chiefly women. It is not incumbent on me to state the prices Mr. Wells realizes on his fowls, for Londoners know what they have to pay for them; but his cheque comes to hand every morning for the previous day's supply, and no bad debts are made. The salesman's commissions seem rather high—but then, the producer is shielded from risk of his own.

Poultry farming, as a £ s. d. undertaking, can only be made to pay on a comprehensive and well administered plan, cleanliness and plenty of fresh ground are necessary to the health of the fowls; strict attention to details to the success of the system. Many farmers may possibly look on poultry farming as rather *infra dig*, but there is money in it if only properly carried out, and this is more than can be said of many kinds of farming in the present day. In any case, Mr. Wells' poultry farm is well worth a visit, and it may reasonably be hoped that his example will be widely followed.*

We publish the above interesting account by a special commissioner (who we may state is a very high authority in the agricultural world) of a veritable poultry farm carried on by a practical farmer at this very moment in England. On a few points not dealt with by our commissioner, but of great practical importance in the workings of such undertakings, Mr. Wells has been kind enough to reply to our enquiries; and the particulars here given are therefore to be taken as supplementary to those given above. The chief points on which we sought more information were (1) the system of feeding; (2) how fresh drafts of chickens were settled or located among older tenants of any given wagon; and (3) the actual cash prospects or working of the concern. For the extreme frankness of the replies on all points, both ourselves and our readers are extremely indebted. The last question, indeed, we did not think would be answer-